

## QUOTABLE QUOTES

DARRYL FRANCIS

London, England

In my library I have several volumes of collected quotations, both familiar and unfamiliar. I recently decided to dig up some quotations that might be of interest to readers of Word Ways -- quotations about words, language, speech, dictionaries and so on. Forty of the quotations are given in this article. Savor them, think about them; do you agree with each quotation? or disagree? Some of the quotations seem to be contradicted by others -- for example, look at the first two in the list below. However, such contradictions should only serve to make the quotations more enjoyable.

Man does not live by words alone, despite the fact that sometimes he has to eat them (Adlai Stevenson)

Man is a creature who lives not upon bread alone, but principally by catchwords (Robert Louis Stevenson)

Words, in their primary or immediate signification, stand for nothing but the ideas in the mind of him who uses them (John Locke)

If language be not in accordance with the truth of things, affairs cannot be carried on to success (Confucius)

If a people have no word for something, either it does not matter to them or it matters too much to talk about it (Edgar Z. Friedenberg)

Words should be an intense pleasure just as leather should be to a shoemaker (Evelyn Waugh)

Neither is a dictionary a bad book to read. There is no cant in it, no excess of explanation, and it is full of suggestion -- the raw material of possible poems and histories (Emerson)

Dictionaries are like watches: the worst is better than none, and the best cannot be expected to go quite true (Samuel Johnson)

When I feel inclined to read poetry I take down my dictionary. The poetry of words is quite as beautiful as that of sentences (Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr.)

The trouble with the dictionary is that you have to know how a word is spelled before you can look it up to see how it is spelled (Will Cuppy)

I don't give a damn for a man that can spell a word only one way  
(Mark Twain)

Slang is a poor man's poetry (John Moore)

Slang is a language that rolls up its sleeves, spits on its hands and gets to work (Carl Sandburg)

Maybe ain't ain't so correct, but I notice that lots of folk who ain't using ain't ain't eatin' (Will Rogers)

Many people would be more truthful were it not for their uncontrollable desire to talk (Edgar Watson Howe)

The pen is mightier than the sword (Bulwer-Lytton)

The tongue is more to be feared than the sword (Japanese proverb)

Evil words cut worse than swords (English proverb)

Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me  
(English proverb)

Speech is the mirror of action (Diogenes Laertius)

Talkers are no good doers (William Shakespeare)

Because everybody can talk, everybody thinks he can talk about language (Goethe)

The habit of common and continuous speech is a symptom of mental deficiency. It proceeds from not knowing what is going on in other people's minds (Walter Bagehot)

Learned conversation is either the affectation of the ignorant or the profession of the mentally unemployed (Oscar Wilde)

The art of conversation is the art of hearing as well as of being heard  
(William Hazlitt)

Too much agreement kills a chat (Eldridge Cleaver)

It usually takes more than three weeks to prepare a good impromptu speech (Mark Twain)

An unusual word should be shunned as a ship would shun a reef (Julius Caesar)

Short words are best and the old words when short are best of all  
(Winston Churchill)

Actions lie louder than words (Carolyn Wells)

The Romans would never have found time to conquer the world if they had been obliged first to learn Latin (Heinrich Heine)

It has been allowable, and ever will be, to coin a word marked with modern significance (Horace)

A man of words and not deeds is like a garden full of weeds (English proverb)

A book is not harmless merely because no one is offended by it (T. S. Eliot)

There is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book. Books are well written or badly written (Oscar Wilde)

The only important thing in a book is the meaning it has for you (Somerset Maugham)

Every abridgement of a good book is a stupid abridgement (Montaigne)

A fine quotation is a diamond on the finger of a man of wit, and a pebble in the hand of a fool (Joseph Roux)

A short saying oft contains much wisdom (Sophocles)

Nothing ever becomes real until it is experienced --- Even a proverb is no proverb to you till your life has illustrated it (John Keats)

I hate quotations. Tell me what you know (Emerson)

## REFERENCES

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